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THE KINGDOM AND ITS RESOURCES:
A Sermon
PREACHED BEFORE THE
CONVOCATION OF TRINITY UNIVERSITY,
IN THE
COLLEGE CHAPEL,
ON
JUNE 25TH, 1894,
BY
THE REV. THE PROVOST.

TORONTO:
ROWSSELL AND HUTCHISON, PRINTERS.
1894.



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THE KINGDOM AND ITS RESOURCES:

A Sermon

PREACHED BEFORE THE

CONVOCAION OF TRINITY UNIVERSITY,

IN THE

COLLEGE CHAPEL,

WITH THE PROVOST'S
COMPLIMENTS.

BY

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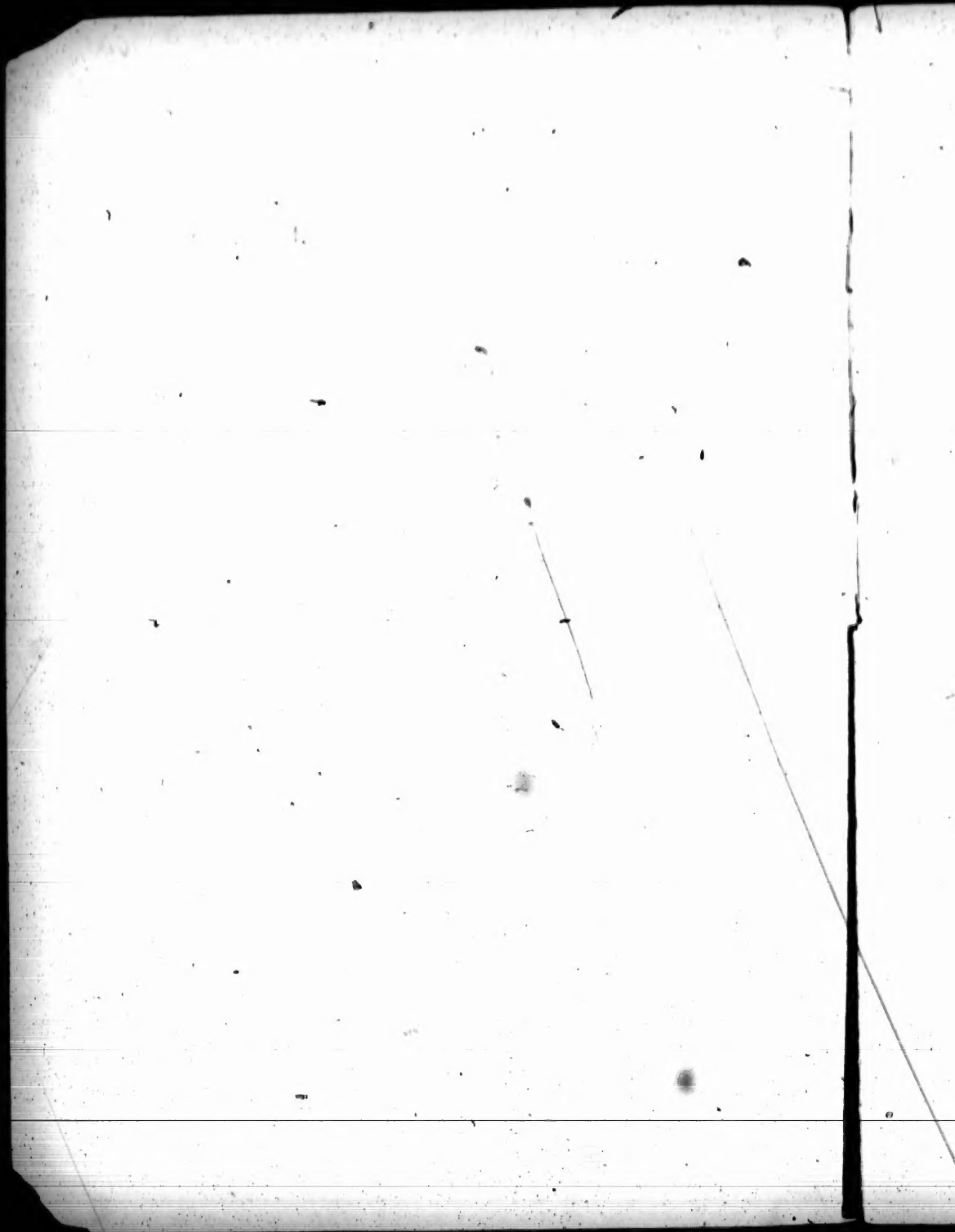
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THE KINGDOM AND ITS RESOURCES.

"My kingdom is not of this world."—ST. JOHN XVIII. 36.

There are probably few earnest Christians who are not at times startled and perplexed at the contrast between the greatness of the Church's claim and the apparent meagreness of the means at her disposal for its accomplishment. For a time, it may be, all seems to go well, and then suddenly, as in a moment of revelation, the whole scene is lit up as with a cold, sad light, while the searching question is irresistibly borne in upon us that will brook no evasion, "How many loaves have ye"? What means have you at your disposal wherewith to carry through the high resolve? And at length we muster courage to make our count and give our answer. We have but five barley loaves and two fishes, and what are they amongst so many?

Yes, it is an old experience, as old as the days of the first apostles on the Galilean hills, part of that discipline of necessary trial which the Church of Jesus Christ in a sinful world can never escape. The unceasing demand for faith and hope—faith to distribute when the stock seems so scanty; hope to go forward when the obstacles seem so great. It is the necessary law of the growth of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. As true in the 2nd and 3rd centuries as ever in the 19th, that the mass of the power and of the wealth of the world so frequently ranges itself on the opposing side,

refusing its adhesion to the greatest and most stupendous of all the heroic tasks that have entered into the minds of men.

The contrast, as I have said, is familiar to us in the Canadian Church. There are a thousand causes incident to the present stage of our progress, which bring it home sharply and unceasingly to all those who set themselves to any high enterprise in the great Master's Name.

One thing, however, is quite certain. The contrast can never, in the very darkest hour of the Church's struggle, be half as terrible as it was in the throes of the Church's birth, at the time when the great Master first uttered the words of the text.

The picture has been drawn by a masterhand in the Gospel. On the one side, the Roman governor with the strong legions at his back, conscious that he represented the whole might and power of Imperial Rome; and on the other, the helpless prisoner, so soon to die, spurned and rejected by every human force on which he could count, the very embodiment of abject failure, of absolute weakness.

How impossible it seems not to sympathize with the sharp, searching question, "Art thou a King, then"? How difficult to banish all misgivings, all sense of apparent unreality, as we watch those sacred lips that cannot lie, frame so calmly, so unhesitatingly the strong undaunted claim, "My kingdom is not of this world," and yet, if we will but listen, the very words themselves go far to answer our difficulty. My kingdom springs not out of this order in its present fallen, imperfect state. Its foundations are laid strong, firm, and immovable, but not based upon the changing, shifting phenomena of this world; rather are they imbedded deep in that spiritual order and constitution of things which no human

wilfulness can ever shake, fixed, amid all the babel-tongued voices of human contradictions, upon the immovable basis of an irrevocable Divine Decree. Yes, the turn of the conversation shows that another scene, altogether removed from the judgment of Pilate, was passing before the mind of our Lord. The vociferating crowd, the relentless rulers, the vacillating judge, all have given place in our Lord's sight to the vision of that world of God from whence He came—the source of His abiding sovereignty. The trained acumen of the Roman judge once again finds itself at fault while he recognizes his entire inability to grasp the workings of the prisoner's mind as he proceeds, "for this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world to bear witness unto the truth."

Our Lord's thoughts were clearly far away, fixed upon the Divine purpose displayed in the very creation of man, destined at length to be realized despite all that sin and hate can ever accomplish; upon the eternal purpose to crown Humanity in its full development by the gift of Himself, and then to sum up the whole cycle of things in Christ. They were fixed upon that supreme mission from the Father, in virtue of which He came to the world of men who knew Him not, and whose ignorance of their true destiny could only be done away by the revelation of His own bitter sacrifice; upon the priestly work for man, to which He had now consecrated Himself, on all that yet remained to be done in the last and awful oblation so soon to be completed. They were fixed upon His saving purpose to insert thus into the corrupt mass of Humanity the pure influence of His own perfect Life and Will; upon the power of that cleansing Blood, by which the falseness of our sinful state was to be put away, and men prepared once more to receive the Eter-

nal Spirit of Truth. Yes, these, it is clear, are the conceptions which quickly pass across the background of our Lord's mind, as after the emphatically reiterated claim to His sovereignty He adds in explanation, "For this cause came I into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth."

Just as deep down beneath the world of human things, lie in all probability undiscovered sources of physical energy, so deep beneath the surface of our common life lie the sources of the Divine Kingdom ; fixed not in the phenomenal but in the Eternal, not in the sphere of sense but in that of Divine spiritual realities which only the spiritually quickened can discern, not in the possession of material wealth or force or power, but in the fruits of the Incarnation, the Passion, and of Pentecost, in the treasures of saintly life and character which follow from the entrance into Humanity of the Will of Jesus Christ welcomed and assimilated in the lives of His saints.

And yet though the true life and glory of the Church be thus hid from the common eye ; a matter of faith, as our Creed reminds us, the faith which can discern working in the tangled complicated mazes of human purpose the strong patient power of the Incarnation, the energies of the Passion, the gentle influences of the Eternal Spirit. Though all this be so on its inner Divine originating side, yet in its outward manifestation it must be exhibited like other forces through the operation of human wills. It must reveal itself in the field of human action and not merely in the ideals of human thought. It must take its station with other things upon the broad field of actual human history. It must subject itself to the laws of association which govern all vigorous and powerful effort. Its source is yonder but its workings

are here. It is an actual force that must be reckoned with like all other actual forces, and like them too must submit itself perforce to be weighed and estimated by the scales of human judgment. The very words of our Lord remind us of this aspect of the Kingdom, even if the irresistible pressure of experience could ever let us forget it. "For this end *was I born*, for this cause came I into the world."

Just as the eternal purpose of the Father and the eternal mission of the Son and the Spirit were to be realized in time in the actual sequence of historic event, so the work of the Church is necessarily conditioned and differentiated by the varying environment in which from time to time her lot is cast. It must be hammered out by the strong continuous effort of obedient wills. On the earthly side it must be sustained and energized by the supply of those natural forces which God has placed in our hands that we may then hallow and consecrate them to Him. The Church is necessarily dependent in a real sense upon the food that comes out of the earth for her support; whilst she is none the less fed by the Bread of Heaven and partakes of angels' food, yet she cannot escape the law of subjection to earthly and historical conditions, which we trace so vividly in the life of the great Master Himself. One special consequence of this we will notice.

The Church's subjection to the law of associated work will necessarily cause her spirit to pass beyond the embodiment of individual lives, and to realize itself in the more enduring and stronger corporate life of corresponding institutions. It is as a body that she is to permeate society. It is through the associated force of institutions that much of her highest work must be done. We know how, in the institution of the Holy Orders, or of the Corporate Body of the Episcopate, our Lord has given this principle the highest sanction;

how persistently it has always been exhibited in the actual historical workings of the Church. And yet there is a subtle danger here which lies very close to this undoubted truth—a danger against which we are constantly warned, whether in Holy Scripture or in the sad record of the Church's past. It is the danger of mistaking the body for the life, the casket for the jewel, the institution for the Spirit by which it was created. We know, would to God we may never forget, the necessary judgment which ever follows upon so fatal an error—the unfailing protection is withdrawn, the seed of immortality is lacking—the institution which has thus become false to its own origin is left to share the common fate of all earthly things, deprived of the true spirit of its permanence.

We know well how the sad process is begun. The successive steps by which the purity of the ideal is obscured, and the world of divine things is dimmed by the attractions of the world of sense. We begin to "number the people," to count up the opposing forces. We make concessions to the spirit and temper of the world, instead of drawing closer to ourselves the forces of the unseen order, the mighty forces of Prayer and Eucharist and Sacrifice. I need not remind you of the position of the Roman Church as an obvious evidence of the results of yielding to this temptation. We know how glorious was the estimation of that Church in its purer days in the sight of Western Christendom, which loved to see there the one Apostolic See of all the Western world. How splendid were the victories she won for the cause of Christ, as amid the throes of the dying Empire of Rome she brought the barbaric peoples beneath the yoke of Jesus Christ. Yet the very greatness of the triumph proved the secret source of her peril, the temptation to give way to

the seeming necessities of her rude environment, to lower her high ideal at least to the comprehension of these rude sons of the faith, to impose upon them what she considered the necessary yoke of Roman bondage rather than patiently to labour on and train them at length into the full freedom of the sons of God.

The pages of history record in clear cut letters the necessary judgment which has followed upon such a surrender to the world-spirit. The corruption and decay of mediæval Christendom, the contradictions and failure of modern Papalism; all emphasize the lessons of fidelity to the truth, to the highest aspects of our work, whatever our circumstances may be. Nor must we yield to the temptation of supposing that any individual worker, however much his work may be blessed and valued, is aught but an instrument for the manifestation of those spiritual forces which lie behind all individual life. S. Peter gives place to S. James, S. Paul to S. John, but the one Spirit from whom these great apostles were energised for their work supplied their place with the Catholic Episcopate. The lesson is for our comfort in all time. Beneath the diversities of operations lies ever the abiding Personal Spirit.

The high ambition of this University is to embody in this Canada of ours, as the great Christian Universities of other lands have in all ages done, something of the spirit of the great Master's words, "To bear witness to the Truth." No motto could better describe the great object for which however imperfectly we are daring to strive. We dare not be content with the partial antitheses of half truths, nor allow the separation of intellect and character, of reason and faith, of mind and heart. We are bound to seek ever, and with scientific insistence, for that unifying factor which shall

more and more make all knowledge one, so that the knowledge of Man and of Nature may still continue to be the portal to the knowledge of God. Our aims are well known. It is unnecessary here, at any rate, to dwell upon them. Our power to carry them out in ever growing fulness, to reproduce them in the actual life history of our students, where does it lie? First and foremost, in the recognition of the sacred and binding obligation of the task thus laid upon us: in such a way, I mean, as will not permit of the lowering of our own ideals to something more in harmony with popular favour, or for the sake of present advantage imperilling our power to discharge our task in the fullest and best way. It is not in the direction of radically changing our methods that the path of true wisdom would lead us. Rather let us set before us, as our constant and supreme object, the reproduction of the spirit of Trinity in the hearts of her sons, the doing our own special work in the highest and best way. So shall we, in God's own good time, find our every need supplied by the loyal devotion and loving liberality of her sons and of this Canadian people. So, and so only, shall the Trinity we love become a light and a praise in this Province.

Above all, let us plead with the blessed Spirit, the alone Lord and Giver of all true life, that He would graciously vouchsafe to supply all our necessities of loving service, and train up a continuous succession of men, able and devoted, for our every time of need. AMEN.

